

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 724

By Berke

A RESOLUTION to honor and salute the courageous Liberators and Holocaust Survivors of Tennessee and the work of the Tennessee Holocaust Commission.

WHEREAS, the Holocaust was the state-sponsored, systematic persecution and annihilation of European Jewry by Nazi Germany and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945. Jews were the primary victims, with six million men, women, and children murdered. They were destined for annihilation solely because they were born Jewish; and

WHEREAS, other groups, including Roma, the handicapped, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Poles, were also targeted for destruction for racial, ethnic, or national reasons; and

WHEREAS, during World War II, the Germans and their collaborators not only caused the death of six million Jews, but also destroyed the history and culture of hundreds of communities in Europe, some centuries old; and

WHEREAS, during these horrific years, Jews became trapped first in Germany and then subsequent countries. They were first forbidden rights of citizenship and livelihood, and then forced from their homes into ghettos; and

WHEREAS, Jews were forced into slave labor and ultimately became victims of Hitler's "Final Solution," the intended total destruction of Europe's Jewish population; and

WHEREAS, concentration camps and six death camps were built for this purpose, killing millions of Jews in those years; and

WHEREAS, the United States entered World War II after the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941; and

WHEREAS, American soldiers fought valiantly and with honor in the European theater against the Germans and ultimately defeated them; and

WHEREAS, the American military moved throughout occupied Europe and in its liberation efforts, discovered that these camps were full of dead and nearly dead occupants; and

WHEREAS, upon the defeat of the Germans, it was discovered that a remnant of the vibrant Jewish community remained. Some had been hidden, others were partisans, and some by sheer luck remained alive through the horror; and

WHEREAS, America and its military created displaced persons' camps to shelter Holocaust Survivors and help them look for family; and

WHEREAS, eventually some Survivors came to America to begin new lives; and

WHEREAS, some of these individuals made their homes in Tennessee, becoming productive citizens and raising families; and

WHEREAS, those Tennesseans who were in the United States military and served in Europe returned home, but never forgot what they saw in the liberation of Europe; and

WHEREAS, twenty-seven years ago, the Tennessee General Assembly created the Tennessee Holocaust Commission for the purpose of Education and Commemoration of the Holocaust; and

WHEREAS, the history of the Holocaust offers an opportunity to reflect on the moral responsibilities of individuals, societies, and governments; and

WHEREAS, the Commission created the "Living On" photographic and biographical exhibit and Web site to recognize the Survivors and Liberators for their eyewitness experiences during the Holocaust, so that the next generations could learn and take heed; and

WHEREAS, these dedicated individuals have given of themselves and shared some of the most difficult and painful events ever lived, so others could learn from their experiences; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby recognize, honor, and salute the brave Liberators and Holocaust Survivors residing in Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we support, recognize, and salute the Tennessee Holocaust Commission for its commitment and unwavering dedication to fulfilling its mission.